

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

Diversity is not Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, or Toni Braxton singing the same pop contrived music. Diversity is not a helicopter filmed Police Car Chase on the local news, "COPS" on Fox News Channel (not Fox News mind you, but Fox News Channel, so that people think it's news when it's not) and "Junkyard Wars" on Cable. Diversity is not local AM talk jock Roger Hedgecock, Syndicated AM Hate talker Limbaugh, Cable Opinionated Talk O'Reilly.

No, diversity means just that, diversity. Having Clear Channel own all but one radio station that plays any music I like, and having to listen to their same commercials and editorial slant and "style" (used very loosely) is not diversity, nor does it provide any incentive for diversity.

Loosening ownership rules will not, and does not, improve the quality of the news media. There is so little diversity as it is, creating mega-media monopolies will not make it better. Look at the quality of CNN. As they went from Ted Turner to Time Warner, to AOL Time Warner, their ratings have gone down. How does that jibe with consolidation making or improving things? Look at how the media handled the Chandra Levy story for instance.

It was on all of the TV stations, broadcast and cable. It was on the radio, AM, FM, NPR. It was on all of the newspapers, the San Diego Union-Tribune to the New York Times. It was in all of the magazines and on the Internet. But it was not news; in the truest sense. It was a tragedy for the Levy family, it was a disaster for Congressman Condit, but it wasn't news. It didn't give me any information that put more money in my bank account, eased my commute to work, or gave me greater insight into how things work in the world.

Imagine how much worse it will be if Rupert Murdoch controls even more newspapers and TV stations and radio outlets and Internet servers. Because, let's face it, this is really what we're talking about, isn't it? How big of an empire does The NewsCorp need to have in order to satisfy Rupert Murdoch?

Having an ever shrinking number of companies in ANY field does not advance competition, or quality. The big three auto companies owned the automotive market in this country for decades. Three companies had what, 90 percent of the market, and gave us as a competitive reward, the Chevy Vega and best of all, the Exploding Ford Pinto. Remember the Pinto? Because Ford was so huge and uncompetitive they decided that a deadly design flaw would be cheaper to settle lawsuits on than fix.

Quality and quantity are two ends of a spectrum. Media concentration rules are meant to balance them. Things are already to far from the quality end of the spectrum as it is now. More concentration will only make things worse, not better. Just ask the Romans. They faced the same challenges, and guess what? They were overrun by ignorant, uneducated, and unsophisticated tribes, and plunged civilization in the West into the Dark Ages. Let's not repeat that now, please.

